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Health

Monday, February 23, 2009

A sister act for cancer awareness

Carol Knotts and Bev Michel donate their time and talents to help raise funds to fight breast cancer

BY KIM HOEY • SPECIAL TO THE NEWS JOURNAL • JANUARY 29, 2009

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Some people look around their houses and see their belongings. Carol Knotts looks around and sees new chances to raise breast cancer awareness.

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In the last three years, Knotts has raised more than \$200,000 for the Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition, a nonprofit with a mission to raise awareness about breast issues in order to facilitate early detection and treatment of breast cancer. She did it by looking around her house. She called the companies that made any product or service she used and liked. With what she called tasteful persistence, she usually ended up with a donation of [money](#) or goods that could be auctioned.

"I call CEOs," she said. "People, really, if you just work with them and try, they have good hearts."

Items her efforts have garnered include round-trip airfares on Southwest Airlines, a new mountain bike from the manufacturer, a wine selection from her favorite California vineyard and a pet gift basket from the maker of her dog's biscuits. Raising funds to help people with breast cancer has become Knotts' full-time volunteer [job](#). In fact, she quit her job as the head of the information technology department at the DuPont Experimental Station to have more time for the cause. It's because of this dedication and her fabulous results that Knotts was nominated for a Jefferson Award, according to Michael Ryan, a friend who nominated her.

"I just enjoy volunteering," said Knotts, who got involved after her mother died of breast cancer six years ago. She said she became depressed and wanted to help others and hopefully help create more survivors. "Breast cancer really touches a lot of people."

Of all the items she's had donated over the years, probably the best is her sister's talent. Knotts' sister, Bev Michel, is a master photographer who creates and donates portraits of the models for the annual "Northern Lights of Life: An Evening of Living and Giving!" [fashion](#) show fundraiser held every September at Longwood Gardens. All the models are breast cancer survivors.



Carol Knotts (left) and sister Bev Michel work with the Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition, Knotts by collecting items for fundraising drives, Michel by donating her photography skills.

[www.michelphoto.com](#)

CAROL KNOTTS

AGE: 57

HOME TOWN: Chadds Ford, Pa.

FAMILY: Her Jack Russell terrier, Bella

EDUCATION: Bachelor of science, business administration from University of Delaware

CAREER: Retired IT director, adjunct professor University of Delaware

HOBBIES: Helping people, raising breast-cancer awareness

BEV MICHEL

AGE: 53

HOME TOWN: West Chester, Pa.

FAMILY: Married, with three children: daughters, 18 and 8, and a son, 16

EDUCATION: Bachelor of science, physics from Widener University

PROFESSION: Master photographer (showcased at [www.michelphoto.com](#))

HOBBIES: photography, vice president of Delaware Photographers, American Society of Photographers, her children and her dogs

THE JEFFERSON AWARDS

About the honors

The Jefferson Awards are given annually to volunteers in the United States who provide extraordinary public service. Nominated by friends and co-workers, one of Delaware's five recipients will compete nationally.

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1 | 2 Award criteria include two simple issues:

• **OUTSTANDING PERSONAL ACTS.** The individual stands out for taking extra steps. The individual acts were outstanding, unique or heroic.

• **COMMUNITY IMPACT.** Besides heroic acts, the individual has positively impacted the community and helped others.

Do you know an unsung hero?

Send nominations to www.delawareonline.com/jeffersonawards

Or mail to Nancy Leonard, Jefferson Awards, 100 W. 10th St. Suite 215, Wilmington, DE 19801

For details, call her at 295-0523 or e-mail n.leonard@jeffersonawards.org

The awards, named for Thomas Jefferson, were started in 1972 by the American Institute for Public Service to encourage volunteerism.

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